



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

17 MAY 2022

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Orange – Laguna Woods Church Shooting Declared a Hate Crime Targeting Taiwanese People

(U) Orange County officials announced yesterday that the suspect in a shooting that killed one person and injured five at a Taiwanese church in Laguna Woods appeared to be motivated by political hatred of Taiwan. The shooter, identified as David Wenwei Chou of Las Vegas, left notes in Chinese in his car stating he did not believe Taiwan should be independent from China. Officials believe the shooter specifically targeted the Taiwanese community. The FBI has opened a federal hate crimes investigation into the Sunday shooting. Officials also released new details about the shooting, stating the suspect secured church doors with chains, tried to disable locks with superglue, and attempted to nail at least one door shut. Bags containing magazines of ammunition, as well as four Molotov cocktail-like incendiary devices, were found at the scene.

SOURCE: 17 May 2022, [Los Angeles Times](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) California – \$25M in Drugs Recovered, Six Arrested After Border Tunnel Discovered in Otay Mesa

(U) San Diego – Six people are facing federal charges in connection with allegedly trafficking drugs through an underground cross-border tunnel discovered over the weekend that stretches from Tijuana to a warehouse in Otay Mesa. The 1,744-foot-long passageway was discovered Friday during a Homeland Security Investigations operation into alleged drug smuggling after law enforcement followed two people from a National City home previously used as a stash house for cocaine smuggling to the Otay Mesa warehouse. A subsequent search of the warehouse revealed the underground tunnel with reinforced walls, a rail system, electricity, and a ventilation system. The tunnel is the first discovered in the Southern District of California since March of 2020. Law enforcement seized 1,762 pounds of cocaine, 164 pounds of methamphetamine and 3.5 pounds of heroin during the arrests.

SOURCE: 17 May 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) California – CBP Officers Seize 550+ Pounds of Narcotics in Squash Shipment

(U) San Diego – US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at the Otay Mesa cargo crossing in San Diego found more than 550 pounds of methamphetamine and almost three pounds of cocaine hidden in a shipment of squash. CBP announced yesterday that on 28 April, a 25-year-old Mexican truck driver was detained after an inspection of a produce truck carrying pallets of squash uncovered 259 packages of methamphetamine and one package of cocaine. The total amount of narcotics that was extracted from the boxes of squash was 552.65 pounds of methamphetamine, with an estimated street value of about \$1.2 million and 2.78 pounds of cocaine, worth approximately an additional \$39,000.

SOURCE: 16 May 2022, [US CBP](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) District of Columbia – US Set to Remove Five Extremist Groups from Foreign Terrorism Blacklist

(U) Washington – The US is poised to remove five extremist groups, all believed to be defunct, from its list of foreign terrorist organizations, including several that once posed significant threats across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The organizations include the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, the radical Jewish group Kahane Kach, and two Islamic groups that have been active in Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Egypt. The State Department said the terrorism designations for the five groups will be formally removed when the determinations are published in the Federal Register, which is expected this coming week. According to media sources, the US is also considering removing Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRG) from its foreign terrorist organization blacklist in return for Iranian assurances about reining in the elite force.

SOURCE: 15 May 2022, [ABC News](#) [Reuters](#)

(U) New York – US Prosecutors Accuse Venezuelan Doctor of Being Ransomware Mastermind

(U) New York – US prosecutors have accused a 55-year-old Venezuelan cardiologist of creating and selling widely used malicious software that cybercriminals used in extortion attempts on multiple organizations. Moises Luis Zagala Gonzalez is charged with building a type of ransomware popularized by cybercriminals in 2019 and was used in multiple high-profile hacks on organizations in the Middle East, including some incidents tied to Iranian government hackers. Justice Department officials accused Zagala of building up an elaborate cybercriminal enterprise, in which he took a vested economic and reputational interest in his software being used in successful hacks.

SOURCE: 16 May 2022, [CNN](#) [US DOJ](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Costa Rica – Russian Ransomware Gang Threatens to Overthrow Costa Rica Government

(U) San Jose – A ransomware gang that infiltrated some Costa Rican government computer systems has upped its threat, saying its goal is now to overthrow the government. The Russian-speaking Conti gang yesterday raised its ransom demand to \$20 million and warned that it was working with people inside the government. Conti attacked Costa Rica in April, accessing multiple critical systems in the Finance Ministry, including customs and tax collection. According to the country's newly elected president, 27 government institutions, including municipalities and state-run utilities, were affected. The president declared a state of emergency over the attack as soon as he was sworn in last week. The US State Department is offering a \$10 million reward for information leading to the identification or location of Conti's leaders.

SOURCE: 16 May 2022, [Reuters](#) [Associated Press](#)

(U) Mexico – Official List of "Disappeared" Tops 100,000 as Drug Gang-Linked Violence Increases

(U) Mexico City – The number of people reported missing in Mexico has exceeded 100,000, according to official data, with rights groups calling for immediate action from the government to locate the missing. According to Mexico's National Registry of Missing Persons, the whereabouts of 100,012 people are

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unknown. About 75% are men. Disappearances have skyrocketed in the wake of mounting drug violence that has rocked the country for 16 years. According to the United Nations, organized crime groups were mainly responsible for these disappearances with "varying degrees of acquiescence or omission" on the part of public officials.

SOURCE: 17 May 2022, [CBS News](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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